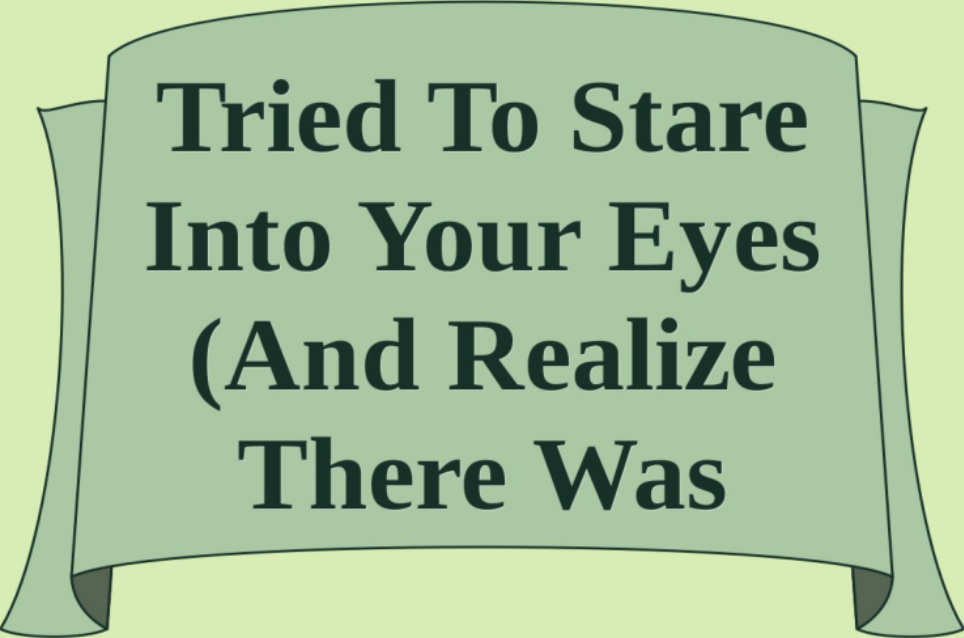




**Tried To Stare
Into Your Eyes
(And Realize
There Was**

Tortellini

Tried To Stare Into Your Eyes (And Realize There Was Something Missing) by Tortellini

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Asthma, Awkward Crush, Bullying, Childhood, Childhood Friends, Childhood Memories, Childhood Trauma, Crushes, Destroying Childhood Memories, First Crush, Friendship, Friendship/Love, Homophobia, Horror, I'm Going to Hell, I'm Sorry, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Not Happy, Not What It Looks Like, Period-Typical Homophobia, Prompt Fic, Psychological Horror, Romance, Secret Crush, Sorry Not Sorry, Teen Crush, Wordcount: 500-1.000

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Characters: Ben Hanscom, Eddie Kaspbrak, Henry Bowers, Mike Hanlon, Patrick Hockstetter, Pennywise (IT), Stanley Uris

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Summary:

After school one day, Richie Tozier saves Eddie Kaspbrak from the Bowers gang.

Oneshot

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Eddie Kasprak should've left school earlier. He knew that all of this could've been avoided if he had just been more proactive, just listened to his mom and went straight home; he had a doctor's appointment too so he needed to rush. The thing was he'd been talking to Ben with Stan, listening to the former gush breathlessly about his crush on Bev. Stan had rolled his eyes, superior, and Eddie himself had just sort of listened. Usually they would've walked home together. But Ben needed to go to his aunt's house and take the bus, and Stan hadn't had any more time to talk because he needed to go to his synagogue. They'd said goodbye. And Eddie had left.

It seemed like as soon as his friends were gone, he came face to face with Henry Bowers and Patrick Hockstetter.

It was useless to run as they advanced on him. He'd just end up hurting his lungs worse. Most of the kids from school had left by now. He was backed into the school wall as they advanced; his hands scrambled in his fanny pack (his first one, by the way) for his inhaler. Oh god, he felt like he was gonna have a panic attack--

"What do we have here?" Henry Bowers drawled, his lips curling. And he towered over Eddie, who was already small for his age. "Where the fuck are your cunt friends, huh, Wheezy?"

"They--They--" he gasped for air and right now he hated that all he could think of was that he sort of sounded like Bill. "They--"

Patrick Hockstetter laughed then, and he smelled like gym class and something even more nasty: like piss, and that time that someone had hit a deer in the road outside Eddie's house. This just added to his terror. And when Patrick snagged the inhaler out of his hands he couldn't do anything about it.

"Heh, you know what he sounds like?" Patrick said, and grabbed Eddie's cheeks; he coughed and choked. "He sounds like he's sucking cock. Little faggot."

He shoved the inhaler into his mouth and Eddie couldn't breathe--his vision was edging on black and they were laughing--

"Hey! Eds! What the fuck is going on?"

--and all of a sudden Eddie could breathe again. He sobbed and dry heaved as Patrick shoved him down on the ground; Henry pushed the newcomer down too, before they stormed off.

"Here." Eddie looked up and his best friend Richie Tozier was standing, glasses crooked, holding out a hand for him. He took it. Richie was grinning, and now wasn't the time to be grinning; it looked a little forced though. But Richie picked up his backpack for him. Eddie took a minute just to breathe from his inhaler.

"...Eds?"

He put the inhaler down and fumbled with it in his pocket for a minute. "Huh? What?"

"I know your secret."

Eddie felt like he couldn't breathe for a second, this time for a whole other reason. His head felt like it was spinning. He was scared. Really scared. Because...this was wrong. He was wrong. Him liking Richie Tozier with his twinkling eyes, his bad jokes and a casual arm around his shoulders... His lips against his... Oh god--And Richie was still smiling.

"It's okay." Richie took a step forward, and in turn Eddie took a step back. "Do you want to...to kiss me, Eds?"

Eddie licked his lips--and then he froze. He had a bad thought.

"Take your glasses off. First." His voice shook but maybe he could pass it off as butterflies in his stomach, not terror.

Richie would give him his goofy smile, cheeks a rosy blush, and say something along the lines of: "But then I can't fucking see, Eds!"

But he didn't.

"C'mon, Eds." His voice got deeper, distorted, and Eddie screamed--no one was here to hear him, to see him. Behind Richie's glasses, chocolate brown eyes turned yellow. "I know you want to do it. C'mon--it'll feel just like *floating!*"

Eddie screamed again and struggled away from him--from that clown, not from his best friend.

And the clown just laughed.

"This isn't possible." Stan was saying, his eyes narrowed. He was the realist in their little group, Eddie knew that. "It's just--it's not, guys. You know this, right? You all know how crazy you sound?"

"But we've all seen something, Stan." Mike said patiently. "Even you have. Can you deny that?"

"...no." Stan sighed and crossed his arms. "Eddie," he looked at him then, and Eddie flinched. "You didn't say anything yet. What did you see? Did you see anything?"

"I know your secret, Eds." Hands on his hips. Lips, flushed cheeks, something against his leg--and then pointed teeth and something that was like rot, yellow eyes and Eddie just screaming, screaming, until he could run again--

Everyone was looking at him now. Richie. Richie was looking at him.

Eddie looked down and didn't meet their eyes, his eyes, his own knuckles white.

"...just the clown."